

January 2019

## Muslims In America: Religion And Identity

Gabriel Lotarski

Wayne State University, gLotarski@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses)



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lotarski, Gabriel, "Muslims In America: Religion And Identity" (2019). *Wayne State University Theses*. 749.  
[https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa\\_theses/749](https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses/749)

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wayne State University Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

**MUSLIMS IN AMERICA: RELIGION AND IDENTITY**

by

**GABRIEL LOTARSKI**

**THESIS**

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

2019

MAJOR: Sociology

Approved By:

---

Advisor

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this work to the people who encouraged me throughout the stages of higher education and to my family. Thank you to Cameron Berry, who has been a consistent light in my life and my biggest supporter. As stressful as this process has been, you have been the person who encouraged me to push through and have done whatever it takes to help me along this journey. Thank you for being at my side. Lastly, my dad who none of this would be a possibility if it were not for his sacrifice, support, and encouragement throughout my life. All you have done and all you continue to do is the reason I am able to do this. I love you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank acknowledge the individuals who were catalysts in my journey into graduate school. First to Dr. Jualynee Dodson, Dr. Sonya Maria Johnson, Dr. Morgan Shipley, and Sophia Koufopoulou who all during my undergraduate career were instrumental in my success. Each of these individuals at diverse stages of my development help foster my love of knowledge, encouraged that pursuit, and taught me various ways to be the best scholar and person I could be. I would like to thank the faculty in Sociology at Wayne State University, who continuously challenged by abilities in the field and encouraged my research interests. Special thanks to Dr. Khari Brown, my advisor, who helped navigate this process and encouraged me along the way. To Dr. David Merolla, and Dr. Shirin Montazer for serving on my committee. Thank you for taking the time to both teach and mentor me over the past three years. Thank you for being the individuals who inspired an interest in quantitative research I didn't know I had and provide the tools to do so. Thank you to the Public Health Department, Dr. Dillaway and Leseliey Welch who, through my position as a Graduate Student Assistant, reminded me why I love Sociology and why I want to continue to further my education and teach. Lastly, thank you to the close group of friends who checked on me, allowed me to talk about this process at nauseum, and supported me. Your support has been instrumental in maintaining my mental health.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables	v
Chapter 1 Background and Theory	1
Introduction	1
Background	3
Chapter 2 Literature Review	7
Chapter 3 Analysis	16
Hypothesis	16
Sample	16
Measure	17
Analytical Strategy	19
Results	20
Discussion	23
Limitations	26
Future Research	26
Appendix A	28
Appendix B	32
References	34
Abstract	42



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Group Identification, Religious Importance, Religious Sect, and Region of Origin among Muslim Americans: 2011 Muslims American Survey.....	28
Table 2: Crosstabulation Comparing Primary Identification to Sect, Region of Origin, and Years of Entry.....	29
Tables 3: Personal Identification Multinomial Logistic Regression Model 1.....	30
Table 4: Personal Identification Multinomial Logistic Regression Model 2.....	31

## **CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND THEORY**

### **Introduction**

The assimilation process of Muslim Americans has been, and continues to be, a unique process, in that America is a Judeo-Christian nation. For example, corporations often use Christian holidays, like Christmas and Easter, as a means to sell products. The Second Amendment of the US constitution forbids governments from requiring Americans to worship at and/or pay into a certain house of worship. Nonetheless, the quote “In God We Trust” is printed on all American currency, God is referenced in the Pledge of Allegiance, and many states display the Ten Commandments in front of government buildings (Lipka 2015). In fact, roughly half of the nation believes that being a Christian is an important part of being an American (Jackson, et. al. 2004; Wormald 2013, 2015).

The population of Muslim immigrants into the United States has historically been looked over due to their small communities. This is no longer the case and between 1992 and 2012, the number of immigrants coming into the United States who were Muslim doubled, from 5% to 10% (Pew 2013). This increased Muslim presence in the United States coincided with the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001 and the subsequent War against Terrorism that began with the United States and its allied countries. This war against terrorism was predominantly focused on Muslim nations in the Middle East, Afghanistan, and in North Africa. Perhaps as a consequence of the United States’ military engagement, hate crimes against Muslims in America nearly quadrupled between 2002 and 2016, going from 34 to 127 reported cases (Kishi, 2017). In 2016, hate crimes against Muslims, who make up roughly 1% of the United States population, constituted 25% of all anti-religious hate crimes (Kishi, 2017 FBI, 20161; Mohamed et. al, 2017). This indicates that Americans think more highly of Jews, Catholics and Evangelicals than they do of Muslims (Cooperaman et. al,



2014). As the population of Muslims in the United States continues to grow and distrust of Muslims remain stagnant, obstacles for these immigrants continue to affect their lives in the host country.

Given the nation's wars against Middle Eastern and North African Muslim majority nations, a noted increased prevalence of hate crimes against Muslim Americans, as well as the fact that the United States is a predominantly Christian nation leads one to hypothesize about how Muslim Americans see themselves "fitting in" within the United States as well as what it means to be an American. More specifically, this paper focuses on how religion and region of origin is associated with Muslim Americans' sense of primary identity as American, relative to Muslim, identity.

There is a paucity of research that focuses on the role that religion may play in the assimilation of Muslim Americans and their sense of "Americanness". There is also a sparsity of research that examines the process of immigrating from a nation that has framed the immigrating individual as an enemy (such as labeling the immigrant as a terrorist), specifically due to both the immigration status and religious identity of the individual. For Muslim Americans, immigration and religion have become reinforcing identities. This is due to the fact that some United States elected officials, media personalities, and scholars have framed the past and on-going war as an anti-terrorism campaign in such a way civilizations and religions are contrasted for their differences (Huntington, 2004; Nguyen 2005). The current Muslim American assimilation is particularly interesting when one contrasts this group of Muslim Americans to previous waves of American immigrants. Unlike the Catholic and Jewish immigrants of Eastern and Southern Europe Catholics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and unlike the Mexican Catholic immigrants of today, Muslim Americans fall outside of this nation's Judeo-Christian cultural heritage. Although Arabs

have historically been classified as White on the US census, there have been an increase in the amount of hate crimes against Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims in the United States. This loss of White Status has led to Arab American activists to call for their own racial category on the US census in order to more accurately reflect the persecuted religious and racial minority status of Arab and Muslim Americans in the United States (Shryock 2008). The unique experience of Muslims in America presents an interesting case as to the extent at which Muslim Americans view themselves as “American” and the role their religion and region of origin plays in shaping this sense of “Americanness”.

### **Background**

The history of individuals from the Middle East and North Africa in the United States is long and involves both Christian and Muslims. Prior to World War II and because of the Immigration Act of 1917, the immigrants from this region were unskilled laborers and although from Muslim majority countries, were not Muslim themselves but instead Eastern Christians. Post-World War II the individuals varied in their socioeconomic backgrounds and were mostly Muslim. It is with the Post-World War II era and the United States backing of Israel in 1948 that the geopolitical interests in the region rise. The Iranian Revolution and post 1979 ushered in popular connotations of what it means to be Muslim and Arab as well as the dichotomy of good versus evil regarding the Middle East seen in the Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations. Samuel Huntington argues that it is not an issue with identity, the United States, or assimilation but it is “West versus the rest”. Huntington argues that it is the drastic cultural differences that prevent anything to the right of his “fault line” from wanting to be democratic, humanitarian, and modern. Huntington argues it is because these nations have strict cultural differences that they are at odds with the west, and not due to their lack of an advanced economy and stable political. Huntington

suggests Muslims will not assimilate due in isolation to their drastic cultural differences and dislike for the west. Although a somewhat popular stance, Huntington conceptualizes civilizations too broadly, bases his theory through an ethnocentric frame, makes no claim for human similarity, and neglects important international context.

### **Social identity and threat theory**

Examining the connection between religion and identity is important because religion has long provided individuals a guiding source of morality, an outline of how to live, a sense of purpose, and the ability to confront and subsequently accept death (Berger, 1967). For many communities, religion can help individuals understand their experiences (Geertz, 1973). Worship rituals, readings of sacred texts, and songs within religious settings help create a sense of community for groups who have experienced the same social-historical and political experiences (Berger, 1973). Houses of worship provide communities a space for individuals often of the same ethnicity to meet, worship, and strengthen bonds within the community. The relationships between congregants of these religious communities form bonds that closely resemble those of familial relationships and in turn these bonds offer support in times of need, encouragement in times of doubt, and celebration of accomplishments (Taylor & Chatters, 1988). It is therefore sensible that for many Americans, as well as people worldwide, religion forms an important part of their individual and social group identity (Bulut 2013, Connor 2013, Diane 2012).

An individual's sense of identity is dependent upon how individual self-identify, how others treat and interact with that individual based upon perceived group ties, and how societal institutions (e.g. media, legal, economic, etc.) treat members of the individual's group (Stets & Burke, 2000). Social group identity maintains that people are who they are based upon the groups in which they claim membership, their sense of self, internal perceptions and the external

characterizations and classification (Peek 2005 & Hogg 1990). The notion of self is reflexive and given that is formed based on and in relation to other social categories. The self-categorization an individual goes through is and can only be based upon the already existing social structures. These social structures are in contrast to each other and have varying levels of status (Stets & Burke, 2000).

The identification of individuals in groups permits the creation of in-group/out-group dichotomies that tend to work in opposition with each other. Given factors outside of an individual's control such as: war, natural disaster, society's social hierarchy, and/or the family that one is born into a person's religious beliefs help to explain how one's experiences shape their identification within a group of like-minded experienced peoples (Peek 2005). Identities that fall within a minority status may require more commitment in order for an individual to maintain the identity. This increases the identity's position in the identity hierarchy and in-turn this identity is invoked more often by those who identify with the minority status identity (Verkuyten & Yildiz 2007). The self-categorization of "in-group" similarities makes it necessary to conform to group norms, and therefore polarizes the "in-group" and "out-group" dynamics (Hogg Turner 1990). This polarization produces reactive ethnicity for immigrants of a religious minority.

### **Threat theory**

When individuals or a group perceive their way of life, values, social groups and/or beliefs as being threatened by an immigrant community, these individuals turn to prejudicial reactions as a means of defense (Bului, 2009). If a threat is simply perceived, whether real or not, that is enough cause for defensive actions. Integrated threat theory consists of four types of threats that lead to discriminatory action by the receiving society (Kim, 2001, Stephan, Loving, Duran, 2000,;

Croucher, 2013). They are as follows: realistic threats, symbolic threats, negative stereotypes, and intergroup anxiety.

Realistic threats are based upon economic, physical, and political threats. Competition for resources pits the majority against the minority therefore providing a scapegoat and breeding distrust within the receiving society. Symbolic threats are based upon the differences in worldviews between the dominant group and immigrant/minority group. Symbolic threats are primarily related to the negative perceptions towards minority groups. Negative stereotypes are the pattern of behavior expected from the “out-group” based upon preconceived ideas. These stereotypes stem from fear of the “out-group” and the subsequent threat to the “in-group” that is thought to come from the “out-group”. The final threat type is intergroup anxiety, in which the fear is related to interacting with members of the “out-group” (Croucher, 2013).

Research suggests that the higher the level of hostility by the dominant group in a given society towards the minority group(s), the decrease in the level of willingness of the minority group to adapt to the dominant culture. Anti-immigrant prejudice limits intercommunication between dominant and immigrant group members, thereby creating a gap in the process of cultural adaptation. The dominant group views the minority group as not attempting to assimilate and therefore sees this group as a symbolic threat. Due to these threatening feelings the dominant group in turn ostracizes the immigrant group (Kim, 2001, Stephan, Loving, Duran, 2000, Croucher, 2013). Croucher’s (2013) study suggests that religion, specifically Islam, is perceived threat throughout Western Europe. The more that countries in Western Europe feel threatened the less likely they are to be receptive of Muslim immigrants. This sentiment holds true in studies of Muslims across Europe. Looking at Turkish Muslims in France, where the idealized French culture and Islam are not congruent with each other, the Turks maintain strong ties to their community and culture rather

than having strong ties to the French culture (Adida et al 2014). The United Kingdom, Germany, and France all have a higher likelihood for the Muslim immigrants of their country to strongly identify with their faith than with their nation of origin (Gest, 2012).

### **Religion and group identity**

Religiosity as an identity, although a more recent concept within social psychology theories, has long been addressed within the context of assimilation in the United States. Herberg's (1955) American assimilation theory denotes that, the United States is not an accepting melting-pot, but rather, a triple melting-pot for immigrants who are Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. The three branches of American religion are all a representation of the same spiritual values that stand for "the American Way of Life". The American Way of Life is defined by support for democracy, idealism, individualism and humanitarian morality (Herberg, 1955 pg 79). Park (1930) contextualized assimilation as a process by which people of differing racial and cultural backgrounds achieve cultural solidarity in order to encourage national existence. This provides a framework to understand acculturation and structural assimilation. Immigrants first experience some level of acculturation, or an adoption of cultural patterns, when settling into a host country. This is widely accepted to be an inevitable part of immigration. Structural assimilation, which is the process of minority members gaining entrance into the same social spaces as the majority group, is thought of as the true catalyst of assimilation. Once one has reached all other forms of assimilation structural assimilation will follow (Gordon, 1964). Although, it remains possible for acculturation to be an indefinite state of assimilation for immigrants, scholars have continued to build from Herberg and Gordon's theories and notions of assimilation in the United States. These scholars have made attempts to understand post-1965 assimilation. Straight-line assimilation, generational steps towards assimilation, and the use of symbolic interactionism have been utilized

to understand social distancing of immigrants within the process of immigrant assimilation (Alba, 1997). It was not until segmented assimilation that scholars used religion to aid in understanding the trajectories of assimilation (Warner, 2007).

Historically, assimilation theories have used individuals been in the context of European ancestry and within the confines of the triple melting-pot theory. In using the framework of Gordon's structural assimilation and acculturation theories in conjunction with understanding that the idea of Americanization has various outcomes as well as the current socio-political atmosphere it is clear that Muslim immigrants are presented with a unique assimilation experience.

It is not uncommon for immigrants to experience anomie when settling into a receiving country. Experiencing the feeling of home, according to Bilici (2011), is a correspondence between habitat and habitus. It is then through the experience of home in both private and public spaces does one begin to shed this sense of alienation from the environment of the receiving country. Muslim immigrants, often from countries of origin where they are both the racial and religious majority, must now negotiate this new environment in which they are both considered a racial and religious minority. Jews and Christians, in the United States, have carved out an "accepted identity" that stretches back decades. This leaves Muslims to navigate this foundation of accepted identities. The assimilation into a society whose intrinsic and extrinsic cultural patterns are Judeo-Christian automatically "others" Muslims.

The negotiation of Muslim American immigrants and their assimilation is not only unique due to their placement outside the Judeo-Christian culture within the United States but also due to their status of an ethnic minority. Muslim immigrants have to navigate within the confines of their faith. According to Bilici (2011), understanding the United States as a place to settle and live a life within the Islamic tradition presents itself within four frameworks. The first framework, Dar al

Harb, is that the United States is external to Islam and is an environment that is threatening to Islamic culture. The second framework, Dar al dawah, views the United States as a place of discovery that both possesses danger and benefits in this framework it is common for Muslims to interact with the broader society in an attempt to change their surroundings. Dar al Ahd, or the third framework, states that the United States is a place where Islam is protected and individuals who are within the Islamic faith are embraced in the country. Finally, the fourth framework, or Dar al Islam, proposes that Muslims see the United States as home. In this framework there is a balance between the Muslim identity and American culture. The most common frameworks Muslim immigrants hold in terms of their life in the United States, as according to Bilici (2011), are Dar al Dawah and Dar al Islam. That the United States is either a place of discovery where the potential danger must be navigated and that the United States can be home.

The minority status of the religion of Islam in the United States in combination with the racial othering of the Muslim experience, may contribute to a sense of Muslim consciousness among Muslim Americans. There is evidence that not all Muslim Americans hold similar levels of connection when compared to other individuals who also practice the same religion. Sunni Muslims make up close to 90 percent of the world population of Muslims, while the Shia make up anywhere from 10-13 percent of the world's population (however Shia Muslims predominantly live in Iran and Iraq) (Council Foreign Relations, 2016). The "otherness" associated with being Shia has remained a part of the historical context of being a Shia Muslim and therefore has been incorporated into the group identity. Therefore, it stands to reason that Shias may be less likely than Sunnis to maintain a group identify as Muslim and may in fact be more likely than Sunnis to primarily identify as American rather than as a Muslim.



## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion is important to an individual's identity because religion is often deeply intertwined with ethnicity, so much so that religion often becomes difficult to disaggregate ethnic and religious traditions. Recent research suggests that the assimilation process is more difficult for immigrants who have immigrated during the last fifty years than it was to assimilate during the turn of the 20th century (Yang, 2001). This may be due to the fact that prior to the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act an overwhelming majority of immigrants were White Judeo-Christian Europeans. Post-1965, the United States saw a demographic change within the immigrant population that remains today. As of 2013, 13.3 percent of the United States citizens were foreign born individuals, of those 13.3 percent, 81 percent were of minority status, although primarily Christian (Zeigler, 2014). The changing racial and religious background of immigrants has brought varying degrees and methods to assimilate into the American culture.

Religion often aids in the assimilation process because it provides important social-psychological resources for migrants (Hirschman, 2004). Religion serves three main functions for immigrants to the United States, aside from spiritual connectivity. Religious communities provide refuge for immigrants. These communities offer a place of comfort and protection upon the arrival in a new place. This is primarily due to the fact that religious congregations and houses of worship allow people with shared experiences, language, and religious beliefs to share their stories and form friendships (Hirschman, 2004). Identity struggles present themselves to immigrants in part from the denial of social recognition in the United States. Religion often fills this void with a sense of identity in connection to their faith and respect from their religious community (Foner & Alba, 2008). Finally, immigrants find resources in their religious institution that aid in adapting into the American culture and creating a life in the United States (Hirschman, 2004). These friendships

coupled with the services that many of these houses of worship provide establish varying amounts of social capital. Immigrants that have been in the United States longer often assist the newer immigrants in finding work, aid in the understanding of social services, teach local traditions, and find welcoming communities in which the newer immigrant can settle. (Foner & Alba, 2008).

It is through these services that religion becomes a source of identity for many individuals. The social groups aid in the self-esteem and presentation of its group members. Members share values, strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures and history as well as a shared future. It is within these characteristics that a collective purpose is created. The objectification of religion, through its transformation of mundane components of life into a spiritual meaning within the group context, provides a strong base for identity (Seul, 1999). The stable traditions within a religion allow a means by which individuals can cope with and resist change.

The strong group identity that is associated with religion is created in part by faith. The faith in a religion can be neither proven nor disproven, strengthening the identity with the group due to the belief that the members of the religious community are “right” in their beliefs (Ysseldyk, 2010). Religion, while often viewed as a choice, is limited in its conceptual understanding and continues to other individuals by designating people outside of the dominant faith as choosing the wrong belief system. In turn, these individuals absorb the cost of being a selected minority (Eisenberg, 2016).

Ethnicity can be thought of as a boundary of symbolic and social distinctions that shape everyday life and actions towards one another. The social and cultural differences between groups dictate the boundary’s significance (Lamont & Molnar, 2002). Boundaries around racial and ethnic identity of individuals, specifically immigrants, can either be bright or blurred depending on their host societies’ religion and ethnicity. These boundary lines are drawn around race, ethnicity,

religion, language as well as other features. Bright boundaries are distinctions that are unmistakable, such as race, allowing for individuals to know where within these boundaries they fit. Blurred boundaries contain self-presentation and social representations, such as language and clothes, that shifts the boundary lines and characterized by higher fluidity (Alba, 2005).

Due to their racial and ethnic identity, minorities often find themselves within the periphery of American society, bound by bright sets of boundary lines that prevent their complete inclusion into society. It is through places of worship that these groups are able to enrich their communities. For example, in the United States, Black churches and congregations work to enhance the Black identity and consciousness through their worship attendance and community. This strengthened consciousness increases Black pride and therefore, the level of political involvement within the Black community (Brown, 1990).

Religious institutions that are transplanted into the United States follow a *de facto* congregational path. *De facto* congregationalism is conceptualized by the idea that places of worship that are transplanted into the United States adopt Protestant customs, much like providing social services and community engagement (Cadge, 2008). *De facto* congregationalism is met with an exodus of many ethnic churches by the second or third generation immigrants. This phenomenon appears to occur across ethnic and religious backgrounds and follows a pattern of three stages. Stage one consists of a monolingual church organized for and by immigrants. Stage two happens as the first native born generation becomes active members; creating a bilingual environment often the leader of the place of worship being bilingual, and often language services being offered in both languages. Stage three is characterized by the structural assimilation of the place of worship with services being monolingual in English, and the transformation into a

multiethnic organization (Mullins, 1987). This is seen within many ethnic churches within the Christian faith.

Second generation immigrants may distance themselves from the culture and ethnic heritage of their parents. For example, second-generation Mar Thoma Indian Christians, members often go through a separation from their parent's ethnic churches by going to Evangelical Churches, claiming that the former church does not meet their spiritual needs (Kurien, 2012). These Indian Christians then become members of multi-ethnic churches or similar South Asian individuals. In the case of Korean-Americans, second and third generation immigrants similarly do not stay in their parents' ethnic churches. Second generation Korean-Americans are creating hybrid churches, not ethnic but also not Evangelical, rather they are a mixture of mainstream Evangelical churches and ethnic churches. These hybrid churches tend to move towards a pan-Asian composition that is focused around race and culture (Kim, 2010). These churches instead of replicating the places of worship of their parents tend to cautiously select which elements of mainstream Evangelicalism and which elements of ethnic churches to incorporate.

The religious institutions of Hindu Indian Americans' mirror that of Black Americans. The Hindu traditions of the Organization of Hindu Malayalees in Los Angeles differ from those in India when one looks at the societal convenience and congregational makeup of these organizations. Through the institutionalization of Hinduism and the preservation of the Indian culture through ethnoreligious traditions, second generation Indian Americans remain closely tied to their ethnic church community, contrary to the established understanding of religion and immigration (Kurien, 2007). Ethnic particularism is the predominant religious institution structure within the United States, although only about 8% of institutions ascribe to religious universalism,

or multi-ethnic members. This dichotomy in religious institutions is largely due to racism, but also serves as a means of cultural preservation (Kim, 2010).

Immigrants find that their religious traditions act as a bridge to the culture of the host society but also as a bonding agent to their ethnic and religious community to maintain the immigrant's heritage (Allen, 2010). Religious institutions that cater to a specific ethnic group tend to be a pillar of that community. In the manner of bridging, these places of worship provide community network opportunities, resettling assistance to new immigrants, English language courses and job training. Bridging aspects of ethnic religious institutions provide its congregants a means for upward mobility, within its youth population. The encouragement and cultivation of civic and study skills within the religious context transfer into skills and resources as a mechanism to connect immigrant groups to capital that is primarily only available to native born White Americans.

In conjunction with bridging, religious places of worship can serve to bind individuals together. When immigrants arrive in the United States, they are expected to relinquish their prior identities and cultures. This however is not extended to religion. Religion has, become a means by which people could, and still continue to utilize today as a means of self-identify (Herberg, 1955). At the same time for marginalized groups, such as Blacks, Mexican immigrants, and increasingly Muslim immigrants and refugee's religion may serve as a means for members of the same group to take pride in their race, ethnicity, country of origin, and/or religion. Mexican immigrants due to being almost exclusively Christian are presented with a blurred boundary because of their religious affiliation to Catholicism (Alba, 2005). Contradictory Mexican Americans are met with bright boundaries due to their racial categorization and language proficiency. The case of Mexican Americans highlights that while there may be one set of boundaries that is blurred that does not automatically negate all other social categories. Places of worship provide a space where group

members can feel comfortable with their identity. Special programs held at religious congregations for traditional holidays allow for the historical and cultural knowledge to maintain a significant part of the lives of the members of the community and these programs instill pride in their ethnic heritage.

The level of bonding and bridging affects differ based on whether the place of migration is historically a gateway city. Religious institutions primarily provide a bridging function for majority religions to the larger society due to the connection that the institution has to capital through the aforementioned activities and opportunities. The bonding function, can at times, transcend historical clan disputes and endorses ethnic identities, rituals and transnational connections. Minority faiths, as can be seen in the case of Somali Muslim refugees, may have a stronger bonding function than non-minority faiths (Allen, 2010). This is due in part to their racial and religious minority status in the United States. Within Europe, Muslim immigrants have bright boundaries due to their race, religion, and language proficiency. Therefore, one could position these boundaries within the context of Muslim-American immigrants given the heightened distrust of Muslim-Americans as well as the diversity in racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Religion for Turkish Muslim immigrants seems to help in their assimilation into American society when compared to non-practicing Turkish Muslims. Practicing Turks self-reported higher levels of assimilation into American life and stronger English language skills than their non-practicing counterparts (Bulut & Ebaugh, 2013). This supports the notion that religion serves both as a refuge and resource for immigrants in the United States.

The proposed life cycle of ethnic churches and multi-ethnic churches may only be seen within Judeo-Christian faiths as these faiths have a pre-existing and mainstream variation of their faiths. Muslim places of worship do not change the language that the services are held in, as it is a

cornerstone of Islam regardless of ethnic background. Although there are aspects of Islam that remain steadfast traditions, the notion of an “American Islam” has been introduced. Williams (2011) argues that now American Islam is being constructed by the second and third generation Muslims who have immigrated after the 1965 immigration transition. Islam in the United States follows de facto congregationalism due to the transition of the Mosque from a place of worship to that of a center of the community. This argument also maintains that it is through this, the backlash received from broader society towards Muslims, that a stronger development of American Islam will occur.

### **CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS**

#### **Hypotheses:**

1. The more religious Muslim Americans say that they are, the less likely they are to identify as American than as Muslim.
2. Shia Muslims are more likely than Sunni Muslims to identify as American than as Muslim.
3. Muslims who have migrated from the Middle East are less likely than Muslims who have migrated from other areas of the world to identify as American than Muslim.

#### **Sample**

This study utilizes the Pew Research Center data collected from April 14th- July 22, 2011 on Muslims living in the United States. During the three months, a total of 1,033 interviews were conducted with Muslim-Americans. The interviews were conducted primarily in English however there were some participants who had the interviews conducted in other languages including Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu. Each respondent was at least eighteen years old. The sample included both male and female participants. The data was collected via telephone interviews, averaging

about 32 minutes, from three sample sources. The first sample source was a geographically stratified random digit-dial (RDD) on land-line phones as well as cell-phones. The second source of contact was from a commercial database that was bought containing 113 million households. This list was narrowed by Muslim sounding names and surnames. The last method of data collection was a sample of previously identified Muslim households from a prior study. Respondents were offered compensation for their participation (fifty United States Dollars). This compensation occurred after the participant identified as a Muslim. Interviewers were, when possible, matched by gender to the respondent to limited the effects that gender may have had on the conversation and data collection. For more information on the sample methodology see Pew, 2001<sup>1</sup>.

## **Measures**

### *Dependent Variable: Group Identity*

The dependent variable, primary group identification, is measured by assessing the extent to which respondents state that they think of themselves first as an American, Muslim, both, or something else. Respondents were asked “Do you think of yourself as an American first or as a Muslim first?” Individuals responded with “American”, “Muslim”, “Both”, “Neither”, and “Other”. Given the low frequency of respondents identifying as “Both”, “Neither” and “Other”, the group identity variable was coded into “American”, “Muslim”, and “All Else.” Table 1 indicates that a plurality of respondents identify their primary identity as Muslim first.

### *Independent Variables: Religious importance and Region of Origin*

This study utilizes two religious variables. *Religious Importance* assesses the extent to which individuals report that “religion is important to them.” Respondents were asked how

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/MUSAM11.asp>



important religion is to his or her life. The response choices were measured by a 4-point likert scale that ranged from (1) “very important” (2) “somewhat important”, (3) “not too important” and (4) “not important at all.” In order to make the variable dichotomous, a dummy variable was created. Responses “very important” and “somewhat important” were combined to make the variable “religions important” and responses “not too important” and “not important at all” were combined to make the variable “religions not important.” Religions not important was used as the reference group in the analysis.

The concept of “*Religious Sect*” measures the degree to which respondents identify within a religious sect of Islam. Respondents were asked their religious sect with the choices (1) Shi’a, (2) Sunni (3) Other(specific), and (4) Other, non-specific. Given the low percentage of respondents who identifies with Other(specific) and Other non-specific, these variables were combined in the variable “other.” This study controls for religious sect of Islam as (1) Shi’a, (2) Sunni, and (3) Other, using Shia as the reference group.

The variable of “*Region of Origin*” reports the region of the world from which respondent was born. The response categories are: United States, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Middle East or North Africa<sup>2</sup>, Pakistan, Iran, and Other. Pews regions of origin variables were created and used due to very few countries accounting for more than 1% of the studied population. The country of origin variable found in their codebook, but not in the data is listed as follows: Pakistan, Iran, Palestine/Palestinian Territories, Bangladesh, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia and

---

<sup>2</sup> Africa and Asia include the following countries; Bangladesh, Bosnia, India, Somalia, Gambia, Africa (not specific), Ethiopia, Guyana, Senegal, and Afghanistan.

The Middle East and North Africa include the following countries; The following nations are included within the Middle East and North African country of origin listing; Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, United Arab Emeritus, and Egypt.

Somewhere else include the following countries; The following nations are included within all other countries of origin listing; Philippines, Mexico, United Kingdom, and other.

Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Sudan, India, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Algeria, Lebanon, Somalia, The Gambia, United Kingdom, Syria, Africa (unspecified), Ethiopia, Mexico, Guyana, Philippines, United Arab Emirates, Senegal and Other/Undetermined. Given the nature of this study, the region of origin variable was coded using dummy variables into the following categories “United States”, “Middle East and North African” “Iran” and “All Other Regions.” The analysis compares respondents from the Middle East and North Africa to respondents born in all other regions and the United States of America.

#### *Control Variables*

The multivariate analyses also account for the following social-demographic variables; race, education, age, family income, years of entry, generational status and gender.

#### Interaction Effects:

##### *Middle East and North Africa and 2000-2011:*

After the initial dummy variables from Region of Origin and Year of Entry were coded, Middle East and North Africa and 2000-2011 were coded into an interaction effect to further understand the relationship with being from the Middle East and North Africa with immigrating into the United States mostly post-9/11 and most recently has on primary identity.

##### *Religion is Very Important and 2000-2011:*

The dummy variable Religion is Very Important was coded as an interaction effect with the Year of Entry variable 2000-2011. This was done to understand how religious importance and recent immigration interaction with the primary identity of the respondent.

#### **Analytical Strategy Section**

The aim of this research is to predict the relationship between primary personal identity, religious sect, and region of origin. A univariate model has been examined of the dependent and

independent variables to understand the frequencies. A bivariate model of a crosstabulation with a chi-squared test was examined to understand the distribution of the independent variables against the dependent variable. The addition of the chi-squared test measured if there was an association between the two variables and its significance level. Given the dependent variable is nominal with three factors a multinomial logistic regression was selected for the multivariate analysis. The odds ratios for the analysis were calculated using the “b” coefficient and the exponentiation of the B coefficient.

## **Results**

Table 1 displays the frequencies of the dependent and independent variables. When not using controls, there is not an overwhelming majority of respondents who primarily identify as American, Muslim, or Other. Table 1 does indicate the following; A large majority of respondents say that religion is important to their lives, at 69.8%. The majority of respondents belong to or self-identify as part of the Sunni sect of Islam at 64% followed by 22.4% of respondents who do not identify as either Sunni or Shia. The largest population of Muslims in this sample were born outside of the United States excluding the Middle East and North Africa. The majority of individuals who came to the United States came between the years 1990 and 2011, with 32% migrating between the years of 1990-1999 and 29% migrating to the United States between the years of 2000-2011.

### *Bivariate Analyses*

As expected, the bivariate analyses reveal that religious sect, religious importance, and region of origin are all associated with group identification among Muslim Americans. Table 2 indicates the following; Sunni Muslims are less likely than Shia and other Muslims to identify as American. On the other hand, Sunni Muslims are more likely than Shia and other Muslims to

identify as Muslim. This relationship supports the hypothesis that Sunni Muslims are more likely than Shia Muslims to identify as Muslim first than American first. Muslims born in the Middle East or North Africa are less likely than those born in the USA and elsewhere to identify as American. Conversely, Middle Eastern/North African born Muslims are more likely than those born in the USA and elsewhere to identify as Muslim. This chi-squared test indicates that hypothesis three may be correct, individuals from the Middle East and North Africa are more likely to claim their primary identity as Muslim.

Table 2 also shows that Muslims to whom religion is very important are considerably less likely than less religious Muslims to identify as American and more likely than others to identify as Muslim. This relationship supports the hypothesis that the more important religion is to the respondent the more likely they are to identify as Muslim first. The pairwise comparison denotes that there is a statistical difference between those who view religion as very important and their primary identity. Table two additionally looks at the relationship between entrance ranges into the United States and primary identity. The initial results show that a majority of respondents who entered the United States between the years of 1990-1999 and 2000-2011 report that they view themselves as primarily Muslim first. When incorporating the pairwise comparison between each group, we see that for individuals who entered between the years of 1990-1999, there is no statistical difference between primary identities. For respondents who entered the United States most recently, there is a statistical difference between those who identify as Muslim first compared to those who identified as American and Other. The relationship between generational status and primary identity is not significant in the chi-square test for first or third generation. However, second generation immigrants are more likely to identify as Muslim or Other over America.

*Multivariate Analysis:*

The multivariate results in Table 3 support the hypothesis that the more religious Muslim Americans say they are, the less likely they are to claim their primary identity as American or as something else than Muslim first. Additionally, Middle Eastern and North African immigrants are less likely than Muslims from all other regions to report their identity as American than Muslim first. Religious sect of the respondent is significant in predicting their primary identity. Sunni individuals are nearly 25% less likely to view their identity as American compared to their Shia counterparts and 26% less likely to view themselves as anything else than Muslim compared to their Shia counterparts. Interestingly, individuals who do not report belonging to a sect of Islam are 24% more likely to report their primary identity as American.

The control, educational attainment, has a positive relationship with respondents identifying as American first. As education level increases one unit, the likelihood of identifying as American increases by 19% correspondingly as educational attainment increases one unit, respondents are 20% more likely to self-identify within the all else category than Muslim. Individuals who report their race as white 87% more likely to report they identify primarily as American compared to all other racial groups. The model supports the final hypothesis that individuals who immigrated most recently and during a heightened anti-Middle Eastern, anti-Muslim climate are 22% less likely to report that they identify as American than those who entered the United States prior to 2000. Comparably respondents are roughly 22% less likely to self-report their identity within the category All Else than Muslim.

The multivariate analysis in Model 2 consists of the same controls as Model 1 with the addition of two interaction effect variables, the interaction between being from the Middle East and North Africa with immigrating between 2000-2011 and religion being important with immigrating into the United States between 2000-2011. The interaction effects indicate that, region

is stronger predictor of National or Religious identification among those that migrated to the United States between 2000 and 2011 than among those that migrated to the US prior to 2000. Among Muslims that migrated to the US in 2000 or later, Middle Eastern and North African migrants were more likely than other migrants to identify as Muslim than as American. However, among Muslims that migrated to the US prior to 2000, there was no difference in Muslim/ US identification between Middle East / North African migrants and other migrants.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship of primary group identification with nation of origin and religious sect for Muslim Americans. The results produced three main findings. First, the more important religion is to Muslims the less likely they are to identify as primarily American. Second, Sunni Muslims are less likely than Shia Muslims and those who did not identify as either to primarily identify as American than Muslim. Thirdly, Muslims born in the Middle East are less likely than others to primarily identify as American.

I argue that Muslim Americans have unique obstacles to assimilate into American society. The assimilation into a society whose intrinsic and extrinsic cultural patterns are Judeo-Christian automatically denote Muslims as the other and un-American. The overall negative views of Muslim are likely shaped by the recent wars and conflicts with Muslim majority nations and political leadership and media coverage of Muslims being a threat. This becomes evident in rhetoric of a “Muslim Ban” and the framing of Syrian refugees as potential ISIS threats and comparing their entry into the United States to the Trojan horse (Trump: Taking in Syrian Refugees ‘Great Trojan Horse’, 2016). The negative feelings perceived by Muslims and fear of hate crimes may contribute to a perception among religious Muslims that they are not welcome. These feelings may be particularly pronounced among the dominant sect of Muslims and those from nations that

are in the Middle East and North Africa. As the results showed, individuals from the Middle East and North Africa are less likely to view themselves as primarily American and more likely to view themselves as Muslim. It is not merely the finding of the significant relationship between Muslim individuals of Middle Eastern and North African descent living in the United States that is of interest. It is the fact that the United States has potentially cultivated an environment where these immigrants feel they do not belong. Roughly four in ten Americans believe that the Islamic religion is more likely than other religions to encourage violence (Lipka, 2017). Additionally, roughly half of Americans believe that Muslims are not part of mainstream American society (Lipka, 2017).

It is the unique position of Muslim immigrants who are both an ethnic and religious minority in a time the United States has framed those with these beliefs as un-American. This research looks at the relationship between region of origin and religious sect as predictors of primary identity and it adds to the literature of identity theory and threat theory. It is through these lenses that we find reasons for these marginalized groups' identification as primarily Muslim.

The results from this study both support previous work regarding the topic and add new insight. In line with assimilation literature, individuals who immigrated into the United States between the years 2000-2011 are more likely to view themselves as Muslim first. This suggests less time to cultivate a community. What is unique about years of entry is this pattern is not consistent with previous literature indicated by the pairwise comparisons between year of entry and primary identity. Taking this one step further using the interaction of individuals from the Middle East and North Africa that migrated from 2000-2011 suggests that the effect of being from the Middle East and North Africa is stronger for these individuals. This shows that these immigrants are not just identifying as Muslim first given their lack of time in the United States, but for other reasons. The significant years of entry effecting personal identity being 2000-2011,

during and immediately after the declaration of the “War on Terror” by President Bush further eludes to it is more than simply time spent in the United States.

Being a second or third generation immigrant has historically, and shown above in past research, been indicative of higher levels of assimilation and lower levels of religious affiliation specifically with ethnic churches (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). In cases of second and third generation ethnic minority Christians, it may appear to be less concentration in ethnic churches and larger degrees of multi-ethnics and of assimilation (Kurien, 2007; Alba, 2005; Chong, 1998). In the case of Muslim Americans, generational status is not a significant predictor of self-reported primary identity. This may mirror the Hindu Indian Americans experiences of high levels of second generation individuals in ethnic churches. The differing circumstances is not only are Hindu Indian Americans a religious minority they are also an ethnic minority in the United States, similar to Muslim Middle Eastern and North African immigrants.

The perception in the United States of Muslims and specifically those from Middle Eastern countries as a threat either physically, economically, politically, or culturally gives credence to these groups retreating into their in-groups and decreasing their interaction and therefore adaptation with the dominant culture. Additionally, it is not just the status as an immigrant that reinforces their close ties to their in-group communities, it is their religious identity that further others them and denotes these individuals as threats. As immigration research shows, immigrant groups’ types of boundaries in a host country are dependent on how well they can integrate into the dominant culture (Alba, 2005; Conner & Koenig 2013; Foner & Alba, 2008). It remains important that the United States continues to develop their understanding of immigrant groups and populations as they become increasingly diverse post-1965. It is this research that sheds light on the self-reported identity of Muslim Americans through lens of the creation of in-group and out-



groups cemented through religious differences overshadowed with fear by the dominant society in the United State, that an increasingly difficult time transitioning and assimilating into the broader culture is a daily reality.

**Limitations:**

The results presented above include several limitations. One limitation of this study is that, while there is a relationship between primary identity and importance of religion to the individual, it cannot be said that this is unique to Muslim Americans. The same relationship may exist for individuals who identify strongly as Christian and therefore express their primary identity as Christian. With that in mind, the salience of religion for an individual may trump his or her national identity. It is worth mentioning again that roughly 32 percent of the population in the United States stated that being Christian is a *very* important component to being considered truly American (Strokes, 2017).

Additionally, the variable of “*region of origin*” remains vague as the dataset was coded in a manner that made it impossible to test all countries of origin independently. Recent studies of Turkish immigrants have suggested that strong religious identity increase the ease with which an individual can adapt to life in the United States (Bulut & Ebaugh 2013). It remains unclear whether or not this relationship is specific to Turkish Muslim due to a unique historically secular national Muslim identity in Turkey or if this pattern is applicable to all Muslim immigrants who immigrated to the United States.

**Future Research:**

Expanding upon this research, the focus of future research will be on a new set of relationships. The literature suggests that involvement in religious places of worship remain an imperative way for immigrants to assimilate into the society of the host country. I am to look

specifically at the relationship between Mosque attendance of foreign born individuals and how Mosques as institutions provide unique bonding and/or bridging for Muslims. Additionally, how one's identity may shift between first and second-generation immigrants and the statistical interaction effects between religious importance, generational status and primary identity will be studied. I anticipate that Mosques that serve as community centers will provide a bridging but that cities in which individuals live, determine how deep the bonding effect of the religious community is. Furthermore, the 2017 Pew Research Centers Muslim American survey data will be released and I aim to conduct a comparative analysis between the trends from 2011 and 2017.

## APPENDIX A

### Analysis Tables

Table 1: Group Identification, Religious Importance,  
Religious Sect, and Country of Origin among Muslim  
Americans: 2011 Muslim American Survey

	%	N
Group Identification		
Primarily Muslim	46.20%	461
Primarily American	30.20%	301
All Else	23.60%	236
Total	100.00%	998
Religious Importance		
Religion is Important	69.80%	721
Religious Sect		
Sunni	64%	661
Shia	13.60%	141
All Other Sects	22.40%	231
Total	100.00%	1033
Region of Origin		
USA	28%	289
Middle East & North Africa	21.20%	219
All Other Regions	49%	506
Total	100%	1014
Immigrant Year of Entry Into USA		
1947-1979	17.00%	121
1980-1989	21.20%	150
1990-1999	32.70%	233
2000-2011	29.20%	208
Total	100.00%	712
Generational Status		
First Generation	72%	744
Second Generation	9.10%	94
Third+ Generation	18.90%	195
Total	100%	1033

Table 2 Crosstabulation Comparing Primary Identification to Sect, Region of Origin, and Years of Entry

---

	Primary Identification		
	American	Muslim	Other
<b>Sect</b>			
Shia	40.30% <sup>a</sup>	32.10% <sup>b</sup>	27.60% <sup>a</sup>
Sunni	24.30% <sup>a</sup>	53.90% <sup>b</sup>	21.80% <sup>a</sup>
Other Sect	40.70% <sup>a</sup>	32.70% <sup>b</sup>	26.50% <sup>a</sup>
			P=.000
<b>Region Born</b>			
United States of America	35% <sup>a</sup>	44.40% <sup>a</sup>	20.60% <sup>a</sup>
Middle East & North Africa	19.90% <sup>a</sup>	54.50% <sup>b</sup>	25.60% <sup>b</sup>
All Other Regions	31.00% <sup>a</sup>	45.60% <sup>a</sup>	23.40% <sup>a</sup>
Iran	41.5% <sup>a</sup>	22.6% <sup>b</sup>	35.8% <sup>a</sup>
			P=.000
<b>Religious Importance</b>			
Religion is Very Important	19.6% <sup>a</sup>	55.30% <sup>b</sup>	25.10% <sup>c</sup>
Religion is Not important	55.40% <sup>a</sup>	24.50% <sup>b</sup>	20.10% <sup>c</sup>
			P=.000
<b>Years of Entry</b>			
1947-1970	33.90% <sup>a,b</sup>	34.70% <sup>b</sup>	31.40% <sup>a</sup>
1980-1989	36.10% <sup>a</sup>	34.70% <sup>b</sup>	29.20% <sup>a</sup>
1990-1999	28.80% <sup>a</sup>	45.60% <sup>a</sup>	25.70% <sup>a</sup>
2000-2011	20.00% <sup>a</sup>	63.10% <sup>b</sup>	16.90% <sup>a</sup>
<b>Generation Status</b>			
First Generation	28.2% <sup>a</sup>	46.9% <sup>a</sup>	24.9% <sup>a</sup>
Second Generation	38.7% <sup>a*</sup>	47.3% <sup>a, b*</sup>	14.0% <sup>b*</sup>
Third Generation	33.2% <sup>a</sup>	43.0% <sup>a</sup>	23.8% <sup>a</sup>

---

Table 3 Personal Identity Multinomial Logistic Regression

Variable	Model 1			
	American First		All Else	
	Coefficient	ExpB	Coefficient	ExpB
Religion is Very Important	-1.810 ***	.164	-0.541 **	.582
Second Generation	-0.121	.886	-0.818 **	.441
Third Generation +	-0.106	.899	-0.229	.995
From Middle East & North Africa	-0.299 **	.742	-0.050	.951
Family Income Level	-0.027	.974	0.015	1.015
Sunni	-0.270 *	.764	-0.299 *	.741
All Other Sects	0.216 *	1.241	0.096	1.101
Educational Attainment	0.176 *	1.192	0.183 **	1.200
Age	-0.038	.962	-0.038	.963
Female	-0.161	.851	-0.067	.935
White	0.630 **	1.878	0.405	1.500
2000-2011	-0.238 ***	.788	-0.240 ***	.786
Middle East* 2000-2011				
religion is important* 2000-2011				

Table 4 Personal Identity Multinomial Logistic Regression

Variable	Model 2				
	American First		All Else		
	Coefficient	Exp pB	Coefficient		ExpB
Religion is Very Important	-1.856	*** .15 6	-0.413		.661
Second Generation	-0.050	.95 1	-0.839	**  **	.432
Third Generation + From Middle East & North Africa	-0.026	.97 5	-0.267		.766
Family Income Level	-0.170	.84 3	-0.090		.914
Sunni	-0.025	.97 5	0.014		1.01 4
All Other Sects	-0.259	* .77 2	-0.307	*	.736
Educational Attainment	0.220	* 1.2 46	0.094		1.09 8
Age	0.183	* 1.2 01	0.176	*	1.19 3
Female	-0.032	.96 8	-0.043		.958
White	-0.156	.85 6	-0.068		.934
2000-2011	0.629	** 1.8 75	0.418	*	1.51 9
Middle East* 2000-2011	-0.207	.81 3	-0.170		.844
religion is important* 2000-2011	-0.136	* .87 3	0.051		1.05 2
	0.087	1.0 91	-0.166		.847

## APPENDIX B

### Measurement of Control Variables

#### *Generational Status:*

Given that the dataset did not ask questions based on their generational status nor did it provide a variable for this, the variable was created given the information available. Respondents were asked where they were born, where their mothers were born, and where their fathers were born. In order to obtain generational status of respondents two dummy variables of “second generation” and “third plus generation” were created. If a respondent’s mother and father were born out of the United States and the respondent was born in the United States, they were coded into the second-generation variable. If a respondent’s mother and father were born in the United States and they were also born in the United States, they were coded into third plus generation.

#### *White:*

Respondents were asked what their race was on the survey. The responses were “White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Other”. Each racial category was individually dummy coded and uses white as comparison.

#### *Gender:*

Respondents were asked their gender. Female was dummy coded from the options of “Male or Female”.

#### *Income:*

Respondents were asked what category was most closely aligned with their total family income. The options were “less than \$30,000” “\$30,000-49,000” “\$50,000-100,000” “above 100,000” and “don’t know/didn’t respond”. Total family income was left coded as continuous and category “don’t know/refused to answer” was coded as missing.

#### *Education:*

Respondents were asked their highest completed level of education. The response options were “high school or less” (1), “some college” (2), “college graduate” (3), “post-grad training” (4), and “don’t know/refused to answer” (9). Education attainment was left coded as a continuous variable and refusal to answer was coded as missing.

*Immigrant Year of Entry:*

The research controls for timeframe individuals entered the United States of America as a means to understand the length of time spent in the United States. The specific year respondents entered the United States was not available in the data but instead was grouped into four categories: (1) 1947-1979, (2) 1980-1989, (3) 1990-1999, and (4) 2000-2011. Understanding that the variable was coded as categorical, each timeframe was dummy coded into its own variable and respondents who did not answer were coded as missing.



## REFERENCES

- Alba, Richard. 2005. "Bright Vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-Generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(1):20-49
- Alba, R., & Nee, V. (1997). Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. *The International Migration Review*, 31(4), 826-874.
- Allen, Ryan. 2010. "The Bonding and Bridging Roles of Religious Institutions for Refugees in a Non-Gateway Context." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33(6):1049-1068
- Ankica Kopic, Lucia Mannetti, Stefano Livi. (2014) Forming impressions of in-group and out-group members under self-esteem threat: The moderating role of the need for cognitive closure and prejudice. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 40, 1-10.
- Bilici, M. (2011). Homeland insecurity: How immigrant muslims naturalize america in islam. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 53(3), 595-622.
- Brodin, K. 1998. *How Jews Became White Folks and What that Says about Race in America*. Rutgers University Press.
- Bozorgmehr, Mehdi. 1997. "Internal Ethnicity: Iranians in Los Angeles." *Sociological Perspectives* 40(3):387-408
- Bulut, Elif. Ebaugh, Helen. 2013. "Religion and Assimilation among Turkish Muslim Immigrants: Comparing Practicing and Non-Practicing Muslims". *International Migration and Integration* 15:487-507.
- Byng, M. D. (2010). Symbolically muslim: Media, hijab, and the west. *Critical Sociology*, 36(1), 109-129.

- Cadge, Wendy. "De Facto Congregationalism and the Religious Organizations of Post-1965 Immigrants to the United States: A Revised Approach." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 2 (2008): 344-74.
- Caytas, J. D. (2012). Conundrum of an immigrant: Assimilation versus cultural preservation. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 6(2), 34-54.
- Chong, Kelly. (1998). What It Means to Be Christian: The Role of Religion in the Construction of Ethnic Identity and Boundary among Second-Generation Korean Americans. *Sociology of Religion*, 59(3), 259-286.
- Connor, P. (2011). Religion as resource: Religion and immigrant economic incorporation. *Social Science Research*, 40(5), 1350-1361.
- Connor, Phillip. "U.S. Admits Record Number of Muslim Refugees in 2016". Pew Research Center. October 5, 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/u-s-admits-record-number-of-muslim-refugees-in-2016/>.
- Connor, P. Koenig, Matthias. (2013). *Bridges and barriers: Religion and immigrant occupational attainment across integration. The International Migration Review*. (47)1, 3-38.
- Council on Foreign Relations. 2016. The Sunni-Shia Divide. [www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divid](http://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divid).
- Davidson, James. 2008. "Religious Stratifications: Its Origins, Persistence, and Consequences". *Sociology of Religion*. 69(4):371-395.
- Diane, Joanna. 2012. "Conundrum of an Immigrant: Assimilation versus Cultural Preservation." *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 6(2):36-51.
- Esposito, John L. 2000. *The Oxford history of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

- Esposito, John L. 2011. *What everyone needs to know about Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Freedman, Jane. 2004. International migration: Secularism as a barrier to integration? the french dilemma. 42, (3): 5
- Foner, N., & Alba, R. (2008). Immigrant religion in the U.S. and western europe: Bridge or barrier to inclusion? *The International Migration Review*, 42(2), 360-392.
- Fong, Eric and Elic Chan. 2011. "Residential Patterns among Religious Groups in Canadian Cities." *City & Community* 10(4):393-413
- Fox, Jonathon & Tabory, Ephraim. 2008. "Contemporary Evidence Regarding the Impact of State Regulation of Religion on Religious Participation and Belief." *Sociology of Religion*. 69(3):245-271.
- Gordon, Milton. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. Oxford University Press.
- Gungor, Derya. 2013. Contextualizing Religious Acculturation. *European psychologist*. 18:3.
- Hattatoglu, Pelin. 2014. "Experiencing the Formation of Hybrid Cultural Identities in First-Generation Turkish Immigrants to the United States." *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 8.
- Hirschman, Charles. 2004. "The Role of Religion in the Origin and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States". *International Migration Review*, 38:3.
- Jacob, K. and Kalter, F. (2013), Intergenerational Change in Religious Salience Among Immigrant Families in Four European Countries. *International Migration*, 51: 38–56.
- Kim, Sharon. 2010. "Shifting Boundaries within Second-Generation Korean American Churches". *Sociology of Religion* 71(1): 98-122.

- Kishi, Katayoun. 2017. "Assaults against Muslims in U.S. surpass 2001 level." *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved December 12, 2017 (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/>).
- Kurien, Prema A. 2007. *A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American Hinduism*. Rutgers University Press.
- Kurien, Prema. 2012. "Decoupling Religion and Ethnicity: Second-Generation Indian American Christians." *Qualitative Sociology* 35:447-468.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 167-95.
- Leon McDaniel, E., Nooruddin, I., & Faith Shortle, A. (2011). Divine boundaries: How religion shapes citizens' attitudes toward immigrants. *American Politics Research*, 39(1), 205-233.
- Lipka, Michael. 2015. "10 facts about religion in America." *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved December 12, 2017 (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/08/27/10-facts-about-religion-in-america/>).
- Liu, Joseph. 2009. "Mapping the Global Muslim Population." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*. Retrieved December 12, 2017 (<http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>).
- Liu, Joseph. 2012. "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*. Retrieved December 11, 2017 (<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/>).

- Loveland, Matthew T., Keely Jones-Stater and Jerry Z. Park. 2008. "Religion and the Logic of the Civic Sphere: Religious Tradition, Religious Practice, and the Voluntary Association." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 4
- Maliapaard, M., Lubbers, M., & Gijsberts, M. (2010). Generational differences in ethnic and religious attachment and their interrelation. A study among muslim minorities in the netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(3), 451-472.
- Marger, Martin. "A Reexamination of Gordon's Ethnclass." *Sociological Focus* 11, no. 1 (1978): 21-32.
- Massey, D. S., & Higgins, M. E. (2011). The effect of immigration on religious belief and practice: A theologizing or alienating experience? *Social Science Research*, 40(5), 1371-1389.
- Meer, Nasar & Modood, Tariq. 2015. "Religious pluralism in the United State and Britain: Its implications for Muslims and nationhood." *Social Compass*. 64:526-549.
- Morgan, J. H. (2013). Disentangling religion and culture: Americanizing islam as the price of assimilation. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 4, 28.
- Morgan, John H. 2014. "Islam and Assimilation in the West: Religious and Cultural Ingredients in American Muslim Experience." *Journal of Religion & Society* 16:1-11
- Mullins, M. (1987). The Life-Cycle of Ethnic Churches in Sociological Perspective. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 14(4), 321-334.
- Nguyen, A. W., Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., Ahuvia, A., Izberk-Bilgin, E., & Lee, F. (2013). Mosque-based emotional support among young muslim americans. *Review of Religious Research*, 55(4), 535-555.
- Park, Jerry. 2007. "Negotiating Continuity: Family and Religious Socialization for Second-Generation Asian Americans." *The Sociological Quarterly* 48:93-118.

- Payne, D. E., & Payne, D. E. 1973. *The american journal of sociology: The denominational society: A sociological approach to religion in america.* Andrew M. Greeley University of Chicago Press.
- Phalet, Karen. 2012. Integration and Religiosity among the Turkish Second Generation in Europe: A Comparative Analysis Across Four Capitol Cities. *Ethnic and racial studies*. 35:2.
- Platt, Lucinda. 2014. "Is there Assimilation in Minority Groups' National, Ethnic and Religious Identity?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37(1):46-70
- Portes, Alejandro, Cristina Escobar and Walton R. Alexandria. 2007. "Immigrant Transnational Organizations and Development: A Comparative Study1." *The International Migration Review* 41(1):242-281
- Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530(1), 74-96.
- Saleh, Alam and Hendrik Kraetzschmar. 2015. "Politicized Identities, Securitized Politics: Sunni-Shi'a Politics in Egypt." *The Middle East Journal* 69(4):545-562
- Stephan, Walter, Rolando Diaz-Loving, and Anne Duran. 2000. Integrated Threat Theory and Intercultural Attitudes Mexico and United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 32(2): 240-249.
- Stetsm Jan. & Burke, Peter. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 63(3): 224-237

- Strokes, Bruce. 2017. What It Takes to Truly Be 'One of Us': In U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia and Japan, publics say language matters more to national identity than birthplace. Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/02/01/what-it-takes-to-truly-be-one-of-us/>
- Taylor, R. J., & Chatters, L. M. (1988). Church members as a source of informal social support. *Review of Religious Research*, 193-203.
- Trump: Taking in Syrian Refugees 'Great Trojan Horse'. [Video file]. (2016, October 19). Retrieved From: <https://www.nbcnews.com/dateline/video/trump-taking-in-syrian-refugees-great-trojan-horse-789644867592>
- Tsuda, Takeyuki Gaku. 2010. 'Nations and nationalism: Ethnic return migration and the nation-state: Encouraging the diaspora to return 'home''. *Nations and Nationalism* Vol. 16, (4): 616
- Van Dijk, Joanne and Ghada Botros. 2009. "The Importance of Ethnicity and Religion in the Life Cycle of Immigrant Churches: A Comparison of Coptic and Calvinist Churches." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 41(1):191-214
- Voas, David and Fleischmann, Fenella. 2012. "Islam Moves West: Religious Change in the First and Second Generations." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 38:525-45.
- Yang, Fenggang. 2001. "Religion and Ethnicity Among New Immigrants: The Impact of Majority/Minority Status in Home and Host Countries." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40(3): 367-378.
- Yang, Fenggang. 2001. "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications." *American Sociological Review* 66:269-288.

- Warner, R. S. 1997. "Religion, Boundaries, and Bridges." *Sociology of Religion* 58(3):217-238
- Warner, Stephen. 2007. "The Role of Religion in the Process of Segmented Assimilation." *ANNALS, AAPSS*, 612.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 2005. *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*. Princeton, NJ: *Princeton University Press*.
- Wormald, Benjamin. 2013. "The Religious Affiliation of U.S. Immigrants: Majority Christian, Rising Share of Other Faiths." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*. Retrieved December 11, 2017 (<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/05/17/the-religious-affiliation-of-us-immigrants/#muslim>).
- Wormald, Benjamin. 2015. "Religious Landscape Study." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project*. Retrieved December 11, 2017 (<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>).
- Zeigler, Karen. "U.S. Immigrant Population Record 41.3 Million in 2013". Center for Immigration Studies. September 23, 2014.
2017. "Incidents and Offenses." *FBI*. Retrieved December 12, 2017 (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses>).
2017. Pew Research Center. *Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups: Jews, Catholics continue to receive warmest ratings, atheists and Muslims move from cool to neutral*. <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/02/15/americans-express-increasingly-warm-feelings-toward-religious-groups/>
- A Timeline of the U.S. War in Afghanistan. Retrieved from. <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>.



**ABSTRACT****MUSLIMS IN AMERICA: RELIGION AND IDENTITY**

by

**GABRIEL LOTARSKI****August 2019****Advisor:** Dr. Khari Brown**Major:** Sociology**Degree:** Master of Arts

Using data collected by Pew from the 2011 Muslim American Survey, this study examines the association between religious identity and American identity for Muslims within first and second-generations. The more self-reported religious influence, the more likely they are to identify as a Muslim first. In addition, the study finds that religious sect and nation of origin are predictors of primary identity. Muslim individuals belonging to the Sunni sect are more likely than Shia Muslims to identify themselves as Muslims first. This distinction may be due to the majority of Muslim followers worldwide identifying as Sunni. This positions Shia Muslims' not only as a minority within the United States but also within their religious and often ethnic groups as well, creating a unique cultural identity. I argue it is through the United States' ongoing war with Muslim majority nations combined with a hostile environment in the United States for Muslims and Muslim immigrants that the degree and ability to assimilate is met with great struggle. Finding themselves in the periphery of American society, bound by bright boundaries that prevent their complete inclusion into society, Muslim Americans use their religion to create a personal and community identity.

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

Gabriel Lotarski was born in Dearborn, Michigan in 1994. She spent the first decade of her life in the area, she then moved to Dundee, Michigan where she completed middle and high school. She was accepted into Michigan State University after high school and awarded a partial scholarship from Dundee Community Schools to attend Michigan State University. While completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology with a minor in religious studies, she was a member of Alpha Omicron Pi, served on the Deans Student Advisory Council, was a research assistant for the African Atlantic Research Team, and received the Ruth Simms Hamilton Award. Gabriel attended Wayne State University following her graduation from Michigan State University. At Wayne State, she achieved her Master of Arts degree in sociology, where she served as a member of the sociology Graduate Student Organization as both the faculty liaison and student liaison and was awarded the Slayman Award by the Sociology Department. She aims to continue her education and pursue a Ph.D.